The Power of Ideology in the Iranian Refugee Policy: The Case of Afghan Refugees

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イランの難民政策におけるイデオロギーの影響力 —アフガン難民の場合—

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要　旨

カレン・ジェイコブセン（1996：655-678）が指摘したように、3 つの難民政策のセットを政策スペクトルの形で提示することができれば、現代史が証明しているように、ほとんどの国が中間に配置される。その中でいくつかの国は否定的な端にある一方、稀なケースでは国際的な勧告に高度に準拠して肯定的な端に位置するケースもある。

いずれのケースでも、ホスト・カントリーが、国境を開き、無条件で外国人新規参入者を受け入れるという例はない。まさに、この文脈ではイランはまったくの例外だといえる。国が、革命直後の社会経済的および政治的な状況に陥っている状況では、国境を閉鎖して新たな問題が国内的な混乱を増加させないようにする以外の戦略は、おそらく不合理で軽率だと思われたが、その中でイランの新革命政府が 300 万人近くのアフガニスタン難民を公然と歓迎し無条件に受け入れる決断をした。

この決断の背景を分析した数人の学者が合意している説は、イランの混沌とした革命的背景、非効率的な官僚構造、経済的負担、1979 年イスラム革命後の政治的孤立、一貫した制定難民法の欠如の結果、イランの革命政府は国境を開放すること以外の選択肢を持たなかったというものである。

この定説に対し、本論文は、研究対象とする、1979 年から 1989 年および 1989 年以降の 2 つの期間の文脈的および構造的条件を詳述し、それらを比較する上で、イランが革命の最初の 10 年間に開放的な難民政策を採用した主な要因は、構造的な原因よりもイデオロギー的な根源を持つと論じる。それと対照的に、イラン・イラク戦争後の政府は、主に、このイデオロギー的状況が徐々に劣化したために、国境閉鎖政策に移行したと議論する。さらに戦後期の政府のさらなる難民政策の変化（特に政策施行手段の変化）はより構造的な性質のものであると論じる。

I. Introduction

If three sets of refugee policies could be set out in the form of a policy spectrum, as Karen Jacobsen (1996: 655–678) suggested, most of the countries will be placed in the middle of the spectrum—as the modern history of the world revealed it. While some are on the negative end, a few rare cases fall toward the positive end—which manifest high degree of compliance with international recommendations. In none of the cases the hosting country opened its borders to mass influx of foreign new-comers unconditionally. This is exactly what makes Iran so unique in this context: an unconditional and puzzling response by the newborn revolutionary Government to the arrival of nearly three million Afghan refugees. The country was stuck in such a socio-economic and political condition that any strategy other than closing borders to prevent augmenting another issue to its internal mess would supposedly be unreasonable and frivolous. It nevertheless openly welcomed Afghan refugees and accommodated them categorically. The general consensus among a few scholars who have sketchily addressed this issue is that the chaotic revolutionary context of then Iran, inefficient bureaucratic structure, economic strains, political isolation following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and the lack of a coherent, codified refugee law, all together had left the Government with no other choice than opening country's borders. This paper, elaborating on the contextual and structural condition of two periods under study and comparing them, argues that the key factor in Iran's adopting an Open-Door refugee policy during the first decade of the Revolution had ideological roots than structural causes. By contrast shifting to a Closed-Door policy, the first post-War Government did so mainly due to the gradual deterioration of this ideological context. The subsequent changes in other post-War governments' refugee policy—mainly observable in the kind of instruments employed in each government's policy enforcement—were of more structural nature.

In the past 38 years, millions of Afghans have crossed the common borders between Afghanistan and Iran and between

Afghanistan and Pakistan to escape from violent conflicts, disorders and political and economic instability in their homeland. The responses of Iran and Pakistan as the main two receiving and hosting countries to these mass influxes of refugees have varied greatly, both in the beginning and over time. Iran received them with generosity and provided them with different assistance from livelihood to education and health and to guarantee their safety and let them freely choosing their place of living. The Pakistani government prevented them from intermingling with the Pakistani society and restricted them to the camps with the minimal facilities and least livelihoods available. Through the passage of time both countries have revised their policy to some extent. On Iranian side, this revision turned out to be a total shift from the previously adopted policy.

In this paper, I will not compare the two governments' refugee policies. Instead I will analyze the policy of the Iranian post-Revolutionary governments toward Afghan refugees and show why, how and under what conditions it adopted an Open-Door policy in the first decade of the Revolution and then shifted it to so-called Closed-Door policy during post-War period.

Understanding Iranian refugee policy is deeply contingent on the assumptions applied to this study; therefore it is necessary to unpack my initial assumptions to outline the research questions addressed in this paper as well as the theoretical perspective and the method of analysis I have used in support of my inferences.

In this paper I see the government as the agent and ultimate decision maker who is primarily responsible for the refugee policy adoption, adjustment and implementation. According to my perspective in this paper—which is close to historical institutionalism—such changes would be understood as "a process that is structured across space and time" (Hall 2016: 31–51).

This paper seeks to conceptualize, define and investigate the Iranian refugee policy as a phenomenon in the overlapping area between the foreign and the public policy domains. I have also taken for granted the contextual effects—especially, the cultural context with special focus on the role of ideas and religious ideology—on the policy making process of the first and second post-Revolution governments as well as the socio-economic and political context's effects on policy making and policy shifting of all the governments.

However, I will not pay any special attention to the political system itself as being of crucial importance in having any key effect on the refugee policy making—except for the first decade of the Revolution. Rather this paper theoretical framework is based on a theory of the state in which policy changes, in part, through the process of social learning. In Peter A. Hall's words (1993) social learning is a "deliberate attempt to adjust the goals or techniques of policy in response to past experience and new information. Learning is indicated when policy changes as the result of such a process" (276–278). He further argues that one of the principal factors affecting policy at time–1 is the policy at time–0, or—as he quotes Paul Sacks—"the most important influence in this learning is previous policy itself" (Hall 1993: 277–278).

Accordingly, in this paper I will elaborate on the concept of social learning in analyzing the key role this element plays in the policymaking processes of the post-War Iranian governments. This paper argues that the refugee policy adoption of all Iranian post-War governments was mainly conditioned by its past experiences and newly gained information in the field. Consequently it is argued that the prior decisions taken by the former governments affected the subsequent decisions taken by the latter ones. In other words, "earlier policy outputs become subsequent policy inputs" (Jacobsen 1996: 660). Likewise domestic, regional and international challenges and the consecutive new experiences and lessons learnt—which they had to pay heavy expenses for and whose dimension of effectiveness have frequently changed across time—have been affecting subsequent decisions taken by the governments in refugee policy arena.

There is another point in this theory, which is of course the subject of controversial debates. It is the "emphasis on the

capacity of the state to act autonomously from social pressures" (Hall 1993: 278; Heclo 1974: 315; Sacks 1980: 356). That is to say, some argue that outside factors and external actors do not affect the developmental process of policymaking directly, and that in defining the objectives of a policy and the argument of policymaking process, the concept of context and its attributes are given no place for argument. My perspective in this paper, however, does not support this approach. In investigating the contributing factors to refugee policymaking of Iranian post-revolutionary governments, I will seriously take into consideration the contextual factors including domestic and regional socio-economic condition, cultural context and political stability status as being of critical importance in affecting both the refugee policymaking and refugee policy adjustment. Accordingly, and for the most, this paper focuses on the role of religious-revolutionary ideas in policymaking process. Analyzing Iran's ideological context—deeply and dramatically affected by the Islamic Revolution and Khomeini's highly unique political discourse which strongly relied on religious elements extracted mainly from the Holy Quran—this paper argues that the key deterministic factor in Iran's refugee policymaking process had an ideological root. Accordingly I will argue that especially during the first decade of the Revolution and the Open-Door policy era, the policymakers inside Iranian political system had to work within a framework of ideas inherited from Khomeini's recognized standards and that those ideas firmly conditioned the political decisions made by the government.

However, after Khomeini's death and the termination of the Iraq-Iran War, many of those ideological frames started to fade away and were replaced by power struggles within the revolutionary camp. This outcome along with the opinion polarization among the elites put an end to the hope of the revolutionary Iranians for a brilliant ideal Islamic State which of course had stemmed from Khomeini's dogma. My discussion's aim here is to analyze how religious-revolutionary ideological context of Iran affected the refugee policymaking to force the government to provide immediate support to the Afghan refugees and how they lost their social base in Iran due to the transformation of this ideological context and other contents after the exit of Khomeini.

This paper intends to generate a deep, new understanding of Iranian refugee policy trends and its contextual causal chains. Not many academic studies have been done on this topic, and of the handful studies that have been attempted so far almost none have addressed the subject matter in an analytical way. Those scholars who have written sketchy accounts of the issue have taken for granted that deficiencies in bureaucratic and decision-making structure of the newly borne revolutionary Government and economic problems were the leading factors affecting refugee policy adoption especially during the first decade of the Revolution. However the findings of this paper reveals that more than structural factors, the ideological context of the revolutionary Iran had the deterministic key role in an Open-Door refugee policy adoption in the first decade of the Revolution and the fading of such an ideological context among Iranian locals and elites during the coming years after the termination of the War and following the death of the Revolution's Founder, caused Afghan refugees to be pushed back and seen an economic burden who should be returned to their homeland.

Depending on the kind of changes in policy that are involved, the process of social learning may take different forms. Accordingly policymaking can be defined as a process involving three variables: the overarching goals that guide policy in a particular field, the techniques or policy instrument used to attain those goals, and the precise settings of these instruments (Hall 1993: 277–278).

Based on my initial assumptions and adopted theory, the outline of the main research questions in this paper would be as follow:

• What are the defined goals of the Iranian refugee regime which have guided its refugee policy toward two basic directions—that is, the so-called Open-Door vs the Closed-Door policy?
• What were the basic instruments in Iranian refugee policy, while instrument is defined as the techniques or measures taken or used to attain those determined and specified goals?
• What are the precise settings of those instruments?

Historical Background of Afghan Migration to Iran

Migration from Afghanistan[1] has a long history and it has been for centuries an indigenous, substantial aspect of the social and cultural landscape of Afghans' ordinary lives. The geo-political location of the country has been so that during decades it has been one of the most dominant senders of both group and individual migrants and refugees to other countries all over the world—among which neighboring Iran and Pakistan has been being affected the most. Among Afghans' micro and macro migration flows to Iran four are more prominent than others in terms of its density. The first one dated back to 1850s before power seizure by Amir-Abdul-Rahman (1880–1903) and the establishment of a major central government.[2] The second, third and fourth waves of Afghans' migration to Iran during 1979–1989,[3] was respectively following the country's occupation by the Soviet Union,[4] the Mujahedin factional warfare,[5] and the rise of the Taliban movement. As a result during the mentioned period around three million Afghans, mostly Shia Hazaras, took refuge to Iran.[6] However for the sake of this paper, trying to analyze Iran's refugee policy trends and changes, my focus will be on the period 1979 onward.

II. Iran's Open-Door Refugee Policy (1979–1988)

In 1978, the people in Afghanistan were suffering from the unrest and skirmishes in the country due to both the coup by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), opposition party to then Afghanistan's Government, and in the following year by the consequences of the Soviet invasion to their homeland. Legitimizing migration, Afghans' religious leaders (Muslim clergies) encouraged people to migrate from Afghanistan to Islamic lands (Hijra Fatwa).[7] As a result during 1980–1981 "each month approximately around 180 thousand Afghan refugees" passed the borders (Goodson 2001: 149), entered Iran, and settled primarily in eastern provinces of Mashhad, Turbate-Jam,[8] and Turbate-Hiydariyyih,[9] while the country was highly struggling with the consequences and internal frictions among various opposition parties in the early months of the newborn Revolution.

Based upon my theoretical framework that considers Iran's refugee policymaking a process structured across time, I will consider the following two critical junctures or turning points, i.e., (1) two historically important periods in Iran's modern history when the evolution process of the Iranian refugee policy was punctuated by, and (2) each period embedded historical events which drove the flow of the Iranian refugee policy into a new path. The first critical juncture synchronized with the first decade of the Revolution including two historically crucial incidents: the Revolution itself under the charismatic leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iraq-Iran War. And the second climacteric turning-point period was concurrent with the outset of the so-called reconstruction era under Rafsanjani presidency in which Iran went through the death of Khomeini, and the

termination of the War. In the following these two critical junctures—which are of crucial importance in my discussion in terms of the deterministic role they have played in refugee policymaking process—will be elaborated on in detail.

1. Two Historical Junctures

1.1. Modern Iran's Critical Junctures

1.1.1. The Islamic Revolution (1979)

The triumph of the Islamic Revolution (11 Feb. 1979)[10] not only was the most important incident in Iran modern history but also one of the critical occurrences of the 20th century in general by introducing a new version of Islam—a blending of Islam and democracy—as a form of modern governance which is unique in its kind.

> The Iranian Revolution expresses itself in the language of Islam, that is to say, as a religious movement with a religious leadership, a religiously formulated critique of the old order, and religiously expressed plans for the new. Muslim revolutionaries look to the birth of Islam as their model, and see themselves as engaged in a struggle against paganism, oppression, and empire (Lewis 1988).

One of the main defining elements characterized the 1979–Revolution was its attribution to Islam.[11] Regardless of the root causes of the Islamic Revolution whether it was more economic, cultural, or socio-political or a combination of all, Khomeini made the best use of religion and religious allegories in order to mobilize the Iranian society. Khomeini pursued the return to Islamic ethics and rituals as enshrined in Shari'a (Islamic rules) which struck a chord with many Iranians. The society was severely affected by dominant religious ideology and theme which was driving them behind the Revolution.[12] One of the Khomeini's main doctrines was based on the obedience to *Vilāyat–i Faqīh* (the governance of the Jurist), which he considered equal to the obedience to Allah.[13] This religious mindset of *absolute obedience* had been thoroughly penetrating the society in such a way that the overwhelming majority of the people were fully obedient towards their so-called heavenly leader and other fuqahā and in any issue seriously took them and their orders and stances for granted.[14]

Based on his general stance of "Islam has no border", Khomeini's viewpoint towards the refugees was anchored in brotherhood, compassion and mercy—items that according to the Holy Quran's significations on refugees must be met. Khomeini—though recognizing the hard conditions and the economic pressures that the War was posing on the country—still emphasized on the government's responsibility toward the refugees.[15] In addition to the deep effects of Khomeini's stance on refugees on the receptiveness of the Iranian society, the intense dominant religious fever of then society—one of the incidental effects of the Islamic Revolution—was another key factor which led vast majority of Iranians to warmly embrace the refugees. In Islamic doctrine respect and reverence toward the refugees is strongly emphasized. For instance, according to the Holy Quran (59–Sure, verses 8–10), He gives a part of war's spoil to the immigrants, and even places refugees before the residents.[16] The resultant output of these factors was an enormous and inevitable influence on Iranian mindset to openly accommodate refugees and accept them among themselves in the most generous and supportive way.

As a matter of fact, Afghans' mass migration to Iran to escape from the violence under the ruling of kuffar (infidels) was basically seen as a religious duty by Iranian locals—as it was interpreted so by the clerics. A number of foqaha (Islamic jurists)

compared Afghans' migration with the Prophet Muhammad's and his followers' Hijra from Mecca to Medina. That's why in the terminology used by the Iranian officials Afghan refugees were being referred to as muhajirin literary meaning "those who have migrated in the way of Allah or for religious reasons". In such an ideological context people see themselves as auxiliaries and compared themselves with Ansar—those who, in Medina, welcomed and aided the exiled ones from Mecca—and took accommodating refugees for granted as a religious and humanitarian duty (Turton and Marsden 2002: 10–14).

1.1.2. The Iraq-Iran War (1980–1988)

On 22 September 1980, the Iraqi Baath Regime invaded Iran and sparked the 20th century's bloodiest and longest conventional war. The Iraq-Iran War is referred to as Sacred Defense or Holy Defense (Difā'-i Muqaddas) in the literature used by Iranian officials. The War that in the words of Ayatollah Khomeini is remembered as a Blessing resulted in more than one million dead, 335 thousand disabled of war, seven thousand missing individuals, over 600 thousand prisoners of war and 350 billion US dollars in economic damages. The Iraq-Iran eight-year War was the second most prolonged war of 20th century.[17]

The revolutionary people of Iran saw Saddam's attack to their homeland as an attempt to kill the Revolution in its infancy while taking use of then chaotic mess dominating the country. This mindset intensely provoked extremely biased and fanatical revolutionaries to take action. The battlefields' front–lines were soon full of popular forces who had come to defend Islam and Islamic Revolution.[18] As a result, the War turned out to be seen as an ideological war between Good and Evil, or Right and Wrong which taking part in it—in support of the Right—was every Muslim's indispensable religious duty—in confirmation of it they hung on to vast numbers of verses and Hadith.[19]

Amazingly many Afghan refugees who had fled war in their own country attended the Iraq-Iran War which left behind it three thousand Afghan martyrs and veterans.[20]

The point is that what was bringing Afghan refugees to the battlefield of Iraq-Iran War, while at the same time Afghanistan was involved in internal war against communism and the Soviet Union? Why they did not come back and fight for their homeland? The answer is simply put in a sentence in the testament of an Afghan martyr—Rajab Gholami:

> "Iran's Fronts are so sacred; there is no such sacredness in Afghanistan's battlefields" (Rajaee 2014: 70).

What did this sacredness mean? And where did it stem from? The concept of the Iraq-Iran War in Iranians' mindset was totally different from the common perception of it elsewhere in the world and in other cultures. Holy Defense left a novel phenomenon known as the "cult of martyrdom"—Farhang–i–Shahādat—in Iranian society. For Iranians, the Sacred Defense took on the deep connotation of virtue, purity, devotion, dignity and blessedness. Comparing the martyrs of the Revolution and the Sacred Defense with Karbala's Martyrs—Shohadāyi Karbala—Khomeini frequently reinterpreted the events of Karbala and tried to parallel Iran's Holy Defense with the historical incident of Karbala to retain public support. Popular slogans also reflected the effectiveness of Khomeini's and later on his successor's political exploitation of the concept of Karbala and martyrdom—slogans like "every land is Karbala, every month is Muharram, every day is Ashura", or those on the soldiers' headbands read "Heading to Karbala"—Rāhīyān–i Karbala—or the ones on their shirts read "Imam Khomeini has given me special permission to enter Heaven" (Reuter [2002] 2004: 46—47).[21]

This is one point; another thing worth mentioning here is Khomeini's stance toward Afghan Mujahedin and their resistance in front of the communist rule of Afghanistan and the Soviet army. Comparing Afghans' Jihad with that of Iranians' he said "The value of what you [Iranian nation] have done here [Iran] and what they [Afghan Mujahedin] have done there [Afghanistan] cannot be measured" (Musavi-Khomeini 1980–1981b: 306).[22]

Khomeini's stance toward Afghan refugees and Afghan Mujahedin brought about a common feeling of love and devotion to him among Afghans—both inside Iran and in Afghanistan. This devotion which was manifested by giving total credence to Khomeini and full obedience toward his commands during early years of the Islamic Revolution was so powerful and effective such that a newly–emerged crime known as being Khomeinist was added to the juridical vocabulary of the communist government of Afghanistan.[23]

In the context of the pervasive spirituality and sacredness prevailing Iran—which was intensified by and during the Sacred Defense—along with a common feeling of devotion to Khomeini, to the Revolution and to the Sacred Defense, and taking him for granted as the charismatic leader of the whole world of Islam, a great sense of belonging to Iranian society developed among Afghans.[24] Likewise the Iranians who were witnessing close proximity in their religious, and cultural approaches both with Afghan Mujahedin in Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in Iran, developed a common sense of fraternity and brotherhood toward them.

1.2. Critical Turning-Point Period

1.2.1. Termination of the Iraq-Iran War (1988)

The War was terminated on August 20, 1988, following the acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 598 by Khomeini. For a vast majority of Iranians, the acceptance of the Resolution and the ceasefire did not mean a triumph or victory at all. Rather, the 598–Resolution and the ceasefire was a humiliating defeat in the eyes of majority of Iranians. For them the termination of Holy Defense meant the cessation of martyrdom and the closure of the Heaven's Doors. It was the reflection of such a common mindset which led poets of Jihadi lyrics like Ahangaran to rhyme new poems about deadly bitterness of the closure of the Gates of Mercy.[25]

Being completely aware of the negative effects of the acceptance of the Resolution on the Iranians' ideological mindset, Khomeini released his message to the nation this way:

> As for the acceptance of the Resolution which was indeed a real bitterness and nuisance for all, especially for me, I would say that until recently I fully believed in our Defense tactic and saw the interests of the regime and the country in its implementation, but due to events and factors which I refrain from mentioning now—God willing they will be identified in the future—and based on the opinions of the country's high–ranked political and military experts—whose dedication, compassion and sincerity I trust on—I agreed to accept the Resolution and the ceasefire . . . O' God, keep martyrdom's gates open to its enthusiasts and do not deprive us from achieving it . . . O' God, our nation is still on the beginning path of its Holly struggle and is in need of the torch of martyrdom . . . You, Yourself, be the Guardian and Protector of this light. Blessed are you People! Blessed are you women and men! Blessed are all veterans and prisoners of war and missing persons and the families of martyrs, and Damned had I still remained

> alive [not being martyred] and drunk the poisonous cup of the Resolution by accepting it and feeling ashamed in front of the glory and sacrifice of this nation (Musavi-Khomeini 1980–1981a: 93).

However, as Eric Rousseau stated (quoted by David Menashri [2001] 2007:8), "after making enormous sacrifices for the War in the belief that they were fighting a Holy Defense, 'Iranians were suddenly faced with the grim reality that God did not triumph over Satan (Saddam Hussein). The people were traumatized and that led to a marked change in their perception of the state and the clergy."

1.2.2. Death of Ayatollah Khomeini (1989)

Another challenge that highly struck idealistic religious and revolutionary mindset of the Iranian society was the aftermaths of Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989. His death "ended his all–powerful, charismatic style of leadership and called into question the essence of the religion-political guardianship of the Revolution and the very nature of clerical rule itself" (Menashri 2007:9). During his leadership Khomeini was powerful enough to channel the ideological divisions among the Iranian political elites and prevent them to be decomposed into political divisions. After his death and due to the political opinion polarization, however, various political sects—from pure idealistic to pragmatic reformist—emerged and gradually the internal clashes between them intensified and the political elites started an open competition over power.

The formulation of policy usually led to serious disputes within revolutionary ranks and most often generated inconsistent and contradictory policies (Menashri 2007:10). This attitude killed the hope of the revolutionary people for a brilliant future and their dream of so-called Madīneye Fāżilih (ideal Islamic State)—one of the legacies rooted in Khomeini's dogma.

These two challenges especially changed the religious and revolutionary mindset of the Iranians and significantly changed their perception of the revolutionary leaders and elites. As a result, soon after the end of the War and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, the religious-revolutionary context of the society started to fade away and likewise the strong positive Islamic traditions concerning refugees and the religious connotation that was attached to the concept of Afghans' migration, started to dwindle as well.[26]

III. The Structural Context during Open–Door Policy Era

The logical presumption of any policymaking process demands policymakers—as for the first step—to weigh probable costs and benefits of the decision to be taken. Of course there are domestic and international considerations—as to be of determining influence on the policymaking process—that should be taken into account as well. So far many scholars have tried to analyze the post-revolutionary Iran's socio-political and economic structure to see how it might have affected its policymaking. However, recognizing those contexts in this paper, and by making analytical comparison between such structural considerations in the two periods under study, this paper argues that with many of those considerations remaining more or less the same during the two periods, the key, deterministic role of ideology on refugee policy trends can be realized.

Iran is party and a signatory to the 1951 Convention on the status of refugees and its 1967 Protocol following which,

according to UNHCR, Iran has been providing services to refugees for years.[27] Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution and its subsequent political issues—which isolated the country politically—[28] Iran was suffering from economic sanctions and lack of access to international assistance. At the same time it was involved in the War and had to endure its consequent massive economic recession. Synchronically the country encountered with the sudden arrival of a mass influx of roughly 2.7 million Afghans in groups on long-joint Iran–Afghanistan border—the proper control of which was of course impossible. It is broadly argued that the fragile chaotic socio-political post-Revolution's condition together with the deteriorating poor economy bent under the burden of extensive costs of the Revolution and the War, stuck the country in such a predicament and dire straits that remained it no opportunity to plan for and manage the suddenly emerged refugee crisis in a proper and weighed way—especially with its highly disintegrated bureaucratic system and decision-making structure. As a result the Government and later on its coordinating bodies in refugee issues acted quit selectively and in an event-driven manner which, in long, led to deteriorated mess condition of the refugees and brought about Iranians' resentments.

However, the Iranian government took formal responsibility for the refugee population and—in sharp contrast to Pakistan—allowed foreign NGOs, international organizations and UNHCR only a marginal role. Refugees were not required to settle in camps, but could live where they found work. They also had access to healthcare, basic education and subsidized food on the same terms as Iranian citizens. But, there were considerable restrictions on physical movement, and government permits were required for travel within the country (Strand, Suhrke, and Harpviken 2004: 2–7).

The Afghans entering Iran during 1980s were issued with "blue cards" which indicated their status as involuntary migrants or muhājirīn (people who seek exile for religious reasons). While they were granted indefinite permission to stay in Iran legally, they were not accorded the status of refugees.

Obviously the Government had been able to weigh the costs and subsequent responsibilities of according Afghans the status of refugees and that's why it refused to accord them refugee status.[29] Likewise the administration system was efficient enough to plan to issue blue cards in a special framework terms and conditions—allocating specific rights and benefits to the blue-card holders, and determining special restrictions considering the country's security issues, limitations, and needs.[30] Then the question is that how it could have been possible for the government not to be able to predict the socio-economic costs of accommodating such a large population? As a matter of fact the Interim Government and the head of it—Mehdi Bazargan—was completely aware of its economic limitations and its domestic issues. It was due to such a comprehensive insight that Bazargan's government emphasized how important it was to prevent Afghan refugees from entering the country. It stressed out the necessity of accommodating refugees into the camps, to be setup along the border, to avoid the consequences of their intermingling with the Iranian locals.[31] However, the precautionary measures that were suggested by Bazargan's government were not recognized by Khomeini and other revolutionary clerics, such as Ayatollah Montazeri, and the Government's plan was nipped in the bud. In fact the Government was forced to surrender to the dominant revolutionary ideology of "Islam has no border". The opposition revolutionaries reasoned that accommodating Afghan refugees into the camps is a humiliating manner and is in sharp contrast to the values, norms, and ideals of our Islamic Revolution.[32] Finally the Interim Government's giving up to the revolutionary extremists led to the unconditional opening of the border and intermingling of the refugees into the Iranian society. However, its mindset's cornerstones of relocating refugees inside camps and of seeing their presence as impermanent were taken for granted by the subsequent governments. Although the post-Revolution governments were prevented from taking any serious pragmatic measures in parallel with those rationale measures—due to the pervasive ideological restrictions—they were given more room freedom of action as the ideological context was gradually fading and

the society was politically becoming more realistic.

As Menashri (2007) argues, since Khomeini's death, the opinions became polarized as various political camps' leaders—none of whom had the personal charm and religious-political power of Khomeini—competed over ultimate authority in dealing with social problems which in many cases the formulation of policy generated inconsistent and contradictory policies. In such a competitive atmosphere full of terror, fear, revenge and national disintegration, the policymakers had realized that they would survive if and only if they could assure the revolutionaries that they are acting within the recognized ideological framework of the Revolution. Accordingly if it happened that the steps they were taking were not fully matched with the Revolution's ideals, they had to masquerade their measures as if they were being done in total commitment and adherence to the Revolution's values and norms as interpreted by Khomeinism otherwise they were doomed to failure.

Not being able to resist against the predominant ideological atmosphere, the government tried to show commitment to the country's recognized ideological framework. The government kept continuing its main policy strategy, which was to integrate and accommodate as much as refugees the country can. However, it changed the functional approach of its refugee policy, especially during War time, in alignment with the national priorities and based on public interests, and socio-economic necessities and requirements. On one hand, as Mohsen Milani (2006: 237–239) argues, Iran used the presence of Afghan refugees "to gain concessions from Moscow, to limit the Soviet supply of arms to Iraq during War, to counter the looming US threat, and to tame the activities of the pro-Moscow Tudeh party as Khomeinists consolidated power in Iran . . . " and on the other hand "the presence of Afghan refugees in Iran provided Tehran with a unique opportunity to train an indigenous Afghan force that was to be relocated to Afghanistan at the opportune moment".[33]

IV. Transition to the Closed-Door Refugee Policy

Considering such variables as goals, instruments, and settings to be involved in any policymaking process, as Hall (1993) argues, I will note two basic changes in Iranian post-War governments' refugee-policymaking. First of all, there was a radical shift from an Open-Door policy adopted by the immediate post-Revolution government to a Closed-Door policy at the critical juncture around 1988—in which the outset of the reconstruction era under Rafsanjani presidency was the key turning-point. This period entailed simultaneous changes in all three components of the policy—that are the goals pursued in the policy, kind of instruments used to attain those goals and the setting of the instruments. Second, it is the kind of change that can be recognized since 1988, while the basic goals behind all the post-War governments' refugee policy remain largely the same but the level and setting of the basic instruments or techniques used to attain those goals had to be frequently modified and adjusted. Those adjustments and modifications were mainly based on first, the consequences of the decisions made and the policy adopted by the former government (new experiences and knowledge gained and lessons learnt) and second, contextual or outside factors' direct and indirect effects—such as socio-economic condition, as well as domestic and regional political status.

As it was argued earlier based on the ideological context prevailing the country, religious beliefs and Islamic teachings emphasizing on veneration and respect to the refugees, the main objective in Open-Door policy period was to integrate and accommodate as much as refugee the country can. However the main aim of all other post-War governments—which could more openly be realized since Rafsanjani era—was relying on repatriation and resettlement of the Afghan refugees.

Accordingly upon their arrival Afghans refugees were generally allowed to integrate into Iranian society. According to Bahram Rajaee (2000: 59) only 30 refugee camps were built by the end of 1998, which on the whole, accommodated no more than 5 per cent of the Afghan refugees (some 94,000 people). One of the outcomes of such a large-scale integration was that it made it impossible for the government to have proper control over refugees' related issues like their population census, their birth and death rate, marital status, job status and so on. This brought about different socio-economic and political backlashes which, soon after the start of Iraq-Iran War, could be clearly observed in the discomfort of the Iranian locals. Those dissatisfactions were especially expressed by the local settlers and officials in eastern provinces over the resultant disturbances in the business market caused by the huge presence of Afghans. About 70 per cent of Afghan refugee workers were settled in mainly five eastern provinces where the possibility for them to find a job were relatively high comparing to other provinces like Kermanshah, and Ilam—which were suffering from high unemployment rate. High Afghans' population density in eastern provinces and its economic consequences resulted in the resentment of the local population in those areas. Due to Afghans' competition in the local labor market and their cheap labor, wages drove down considerably and as a result locals' standard of living were dropped to a great degree.[34] For instance, according to the claims of some local officials many Afghan refugee workers, who mainly provided scarce commodities in cooperation with hoarders, created a black market in some provinces' bazaars. Afghans, who collectively engaged in a business, had gained astonishing dominance on the essential and rare commodities such that even local street vendors of Mashhad had to buy their essential items from a mediating Afghan.[35] Also there are evidences of outbreak of contagious diseases, drug trafficking, theft from houses and shops, and importing trafficking goods from border—which fueled the black market (Nasresfahani 2016:106–108).

In sum, all those socio-economic backlashes forced the government to put the scheme of identification and organizing Afghan nationals' affairs on its agenda. The new contextual setting demanded the government to apply new policy instruments like limiting Afghans' work permission to 16 designated, low-wage menial occupations, and barring them from owning their own businesses or working as street vendors. Gradually the generous offering of free access to education, healthcare and subsidized transport, fuel and basic goods was being replaced with this policy instruments' considerations and limitations.

The termination of the War and the legacy of crippling economic condition left behind it,[36] the death of Khomeini and its subsequent emergence of various political sects, besides lots of other socio-economic and security issues overtaken the country following the huge, prolonged presence of refugees, discouraged people from the Revolution's ideals. This rapidly increasing sense of despondency and pessimism backfired on the Islamic-revolutionary mindset and its representatives—clerics. The outcome made the policymakers feeling they need something to prove and it became one of the big challenges of all post-War governments to prove their commitments to the Revolution's dogma to the exhausted nation. So, as the passions of the early heyday of the Revolution were being replaced with pragmatism, the way was gradually being paved for a moderate conservative government with a more realistic approach.

Introducing the policy of "détente"[37] by Rafsanjani to end Iran's political isolation in the international community in the so-called "era of reconstruction",[38] which had a clear economic orientation, opened a new chapter in contemporary Iran's policy. However, the transition process at this turning point was coincident with the trigger of Gulf War (1990–1991),[39] and disintegration of the Soviet Union (1991),[40] which encountered the country with yet another two big influxes of refugees: 1.2 million Kurds and Iraqi–Shia refugees from Iraq, and 50,000 Azeri refugees from Karabakh (1993).[41]

Learning much from its previous experience with Afghan refugees and coming up with a refugee policy stance closer to the realities on the ground and more accurate understanding of the condition, Iran was conversant enough to cope with the new

emerging humanitarian crisis in a more proper and rationale attitude. The first and the most critical step that the government took toward this new influx of refugees was to settle them in temporary camps—what it had failed to do regarding the Afghan refugees in not too far past. However, when it received Azeri refugees along its borders with Azerbaijan, Iran officially announced its new stance in refugee policy and publicly declared that it had prevented the rush of refugees into the country.[42] The Iran's Ministry of Interior officials stated that, (quoted by Rajaee 2000: 54):

> Taking advantage of our [previous] experience, we did not let the [Azeri] refugees enter the country but rather helped them inside their own country . . . If a refugee passes through the borders it is hard to make him return to his homeland . . . thus we prevented the rush of refugees to our country. We plan to follow the same policy in southern Iraq . . . [and] also in northern Iraq.

So, on one hand, Iran was trying to show its commitment to 1951 Convention on refugee status by providing Azeri refugees with housing, meals, vaccinations, health care and basic education, and on the other hand—underscoring their experience-based lessons learnt from the presence of Afghan refugees—it stressed out on the necessity of preventing refugees from entering into the country.

In the country's confrontation with yet another influx of 200,000 Kurdish refugees in 1996,[43] Iranian officials reaffirmed their refugee policy and expressed the government's Closed-Door stance more loudly. The government went even further and criticized the international community as being negligent toward fulfilling its duty to support Iran in affording the huge costs of the refugees throughout the years and called this lack of support as the main cause that prevents the country from taking in and accepting any more refugees.[44]

> "It is Iran's policy not to admit any more refugees into the country unless in an emergency" (Reliefweb 1996).[45]

With the overall change in the policy trends and objectives, the new refugee policy emphasized on mainly two factors as its cornerstones: repatriation and asking for international assistance. The repatriation objective was put in practice by Iran in 1995 when it officially declared that all Afghans must leave the country and return to their homeland. In support of its policy objective to return Afghan refugees back to their homeland, all post-War governments had to change, and transform their strategies. In most of the cases, policymakers replaced the supportive policy instruments for counter ones—like posing several strict restrictions on some issues including access to education and healthcare and withdrawing refugees' various subsidies.

The implications of such a transition from the ideals of the Open–Door refugee–policy period can be observed in the enactments approved by the country's National Security Council, and in the sharp pro–repatriation narratives of the top–officials of the Immigrants' affairs, and also in the Iranian mass media's dissident and confrontational products in remonstrance to Afghans' presence in the country, as well as in the Iranians' occasional temper tantrums throwing.[46]

V. Iran's Closed–Door Refugee Policy

While the basic common goal behind all post-War governments' refugee policy was largely based on repatriation, the level

and setting of the basic instruments and techniques used to achieve it had to be frequently modified and adjusted according to the experience-based knowledges gained from previous policies' outcome. This adjustment brought about changes that corresponds to this conceptual approach of social learning theory that changes in policy at time–1 is a response to policy at time–0 and its consequences (Hall 1993: 288). Accordingly most of the changes in Iran's refugee policy since 1989 onward were essentially conspicuous in policy instruments than in policy trends and objectives. In sharp contrast to the Open-Door-policy period's heterogeneous setting, in the Closed-Door-policy period not only the government and public opinion came to a general agreement on the essentiality of refugees' repatriation, but also the supreme leader Ali Khamenei was occasionally expressing its support for the repatriation program and the importance and necessity of its implementation and completion.[47]

However, the implementation of the repatriation program in each presidency was not followed with the same pace and through the same strategical framework. The strategic differences rooted in various considerations including the intensity and dominance of the domestic and regional challenges, Tehran–Kabul type of relation, political calculations about local communities' absorption capacity, factors in national security considerations and economic capacity and constrains. In addition, other complicating factors like the country's bureaucratic politics, contradictions and competition inside its decision-making system, and paucity of information—one of the shortcomings resulting from the Open-Door-policy idealistic approach—affected the strategies' adoption and the consequent measures taken.[48] Accordingly the ancillary and subordinate changes in the implementation process of the common objective of repatriation during strategically-oriented Closed-Door policy can be defined through the various kinds of instruments, techniques and strategies adopted by each government. Among those strategies include reducing Afghans' access to administrative and social services by codifying various preventive laws like preventing Afghan students from attending public schools, determining some 23 cities and provinces as Afghan free zones and large increase in expenditures on education, health and social services. Not being in the scope of this paper to elaborate on those practical dimensions in detail, I just try to briefly classify the structural settings for the ease of understanding the second-type of changes in Iran's Closed-Door-policy period. Three leading factors in the structural settings can be recognized: the socio-economic condition, national security status, and Iran–Afghanistan relation.

1. Socio-Economic Condition

As it was discussed earlier uncontrolled and unmanaged intermingling of the Afghans into the Iranian society led to various socio-economic backlashes first in the southeastern provinces and gradually in main, large cities like Tehran and Mashhad—where offered more job opportunities to Afghan refugees. Those consequences were more obviously evident in two fields: in labor competence between Afghans and Iranians, and in marriage and citizenship issues.

The Afghan workers were commonly—and still are—known as diligent and since they are most often in desperate financial need they accept to work for lower wages. This has led to monopolizing some occupations like construction works and well digging by Afghans—occupations which were formerly being done by local workers mainly from Hamedan (Karimi 2007). As the Afghans' cheap labors have driven down wages, consequently the standards of living have dropped for both Iranian and Afghan workers. This has led to Iranians' increasing resentment of the Afghans over the past years. Their prolonged stay and their competition in Iran's labor market—which is not booming enough to meet the needs of the Iranian society even—has gradually generated a common sentiment among Iranians that Afghan refugees are a significant burden who have taken away

job opportunities from many Iranian youths.[49]

Another important issue is that many of those Afghans who settled in the rural areas married Iranian girls—mostly with the intention of being granted citizenship. However, according to Iran's immigration laws women could not pass citizenship to their husbands and children, and children receive the citizenship of their fathers regardless of their birthplace.[50]

> We have now near 35000 kids to Iranian mothers and Afghan fathers—who do not have any identity and the Government does not recognize them as Iranian; so they are being prevented from attending public schools since they are not issued birth certificate (Mohammad Pirmollazehi: personal interview, February 2015, Tehran).[51]

In addition, the Iranians used to strike at the Afghan refugees and put blame on them for the rise in some social crimes including drug trafficking, theft, murder, and rape.[52] In sum, the more Afghans' stay in Iran prolongs, the more likely it is to intensify frictions and resentments between them and Iranians.

1.2. Iran–Afghanistan Relation and National Security Considerations

Iran as a Shia non-Arab leading power in the Middle East region has always been considered as a potential threat by the Persian Gulf's Sunni Arab neighbors. This threat was being felt even more seriously following the Islamic Revolution in Iran and Khomeini's message of exporting the Revolution to the World which led neighboring Arab countries seeking ways to neutralize Iran's revolutionary message. To this end, Iran's main rivals in the region—Saudi Arabia and Pakistan—fully got behind Iraq during its eight years war with Iran. Not being successful to suppress Iran, however, they found Afghanistan a proper field to decrease Iran's influence in the region by spreading Wahhabism throughout the country and Central Asia.

As Milani (2006) argues, after the end of War Iran became more assertive in Afghanistan. It followed more pragmatic foreign policy in its relation with Kabul to lessen the increasing influence of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in Afghanistan. Iran did so to, first, insure stability on its border with Afghanistan and second, to transform the country into a critical trade and energy bridge between Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf. In solidification of its new sphere of influence Iran supported Afghan Shiite minority to organize Afghanistan's Unity Party (Hezb-e Wahdat) and also in 1991 signed an agreement with Tajikistan and Afghanistan's Islamic Society (Jamʿiyyat-i Islamī-i Afghanistan) under the leadership of Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Masud (239–241).

However, in spite of all Tehran's efforts to build up national reconciliation in Afghanistan, Herat fell to Saudi-backed Taliban in 1995 who overcame over Iranian-backed Northern Alliance. Taliban killed more than 2000 people along with eight Iranian diplomats who had been kidnapped—which led Iran and Afghanistan close to war in 1998 and during Khatami presidency. Iranian officials considered Taliban a serious threat to the country's national security. On one hand, they are hardly against Shia world on the other hand they are politically allied with and supported by Sunni extremist terrorists in Pakistan and southeastern Iran—Sistan and Baluchestan province, an area with a large population of Baluch Sunni minority. This province has been a base for armed insurgent Sunni groups like Jundullah and Jaish al-ʿAdl which both have carried out a number of attacks against the Iranian military, Revolutionary Guards and civilians over the past years.

The dominance of Taliban over Afghanistan and the threat of their effects on the stability condition in Iranian eastern Sunni-settlers provinces, and a lot of smuggling activities along borders have been among the big concerns of all post-War

governments which demanding Tehran rigorously monitoring the security conditions in the eastern and southeastern part of the country and along its border with Afghanistan. Those national security considerations have been the main factors leading the government to declare some provinces as Afghan-free-zones—where Afghan nationals are not allowed to enter in. Adopting this strategy, post-War governments have tried to maintain the Sunni-Shia population proportionality to have the security conditions in those provinces under control.

Many critics of the government accused it of discriminatory treatment toward Afghan refugees comparing with Iraqis. As Milani (2006: 249) argues, while the fall of Saddam Hussein raised hopes of repatriation for some Iraqi refugees in Iran, which was compatible with the country refugee policy, the presence of multinational troops in Afghanistan was not what Iran would be favored of. Iran demands their withdrawal while Karzai favors their presence to consolidate his own rule and to stabilize the country. There are evidences of Tehran–Kabul relation effects on the refugee status in Iran. Whenever this relation has deteriorated refugees' condition has worsened and the government has put more pressure on them to return to their homeland.

> "Whenever the political conditions in Afghanistan did not meet with Iran's political interests, the government proved to treat [Afghan] refugees strictly" (Fatemeh Ashrafi: personal interview, February 2015, Tehran).[53]

There are even evidences that in some periods the Iranian government have resorted to forced deportation.[54]

> Police in cooperation with the Revolutionary Guard captured any Afghans whom they came across in the street and sent him/her back to Afghanistan. There were some cases that the parents had been arrested and sent back to Afghanistan while their little kids remained in Iran and some other Afghan families had to take the responsibility to take care of them . . . They [Police] forcefully entered Afghans' houses, captured them and took them to the temporary custody to send them back to Afghanistan . . . they [Revolutionary Guard] rewarded anyone who could report illegal Afghans . . . such policies made the Afghans suspicious about Iranians (Mohammad Pirmollazehi: personal interview, February 2015, Tehran).

However, in recent years, Iran has developed and implemented projects in various fields to support its recent functioning strategy of (SSAR)—The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees—whose main aim is to support voluntary repatriation. It also has continued keeping its commitment toward Afghanistan's reconstruction as one of the preventive measures to stop more flows of refugees.[55]

VI. Conclusion

Exploring Iran's refugee policy adoption and adjustment and its causal chain, this paper—while recognizing socio-economic and political constrains and administrative deficiencies—argued that the key factor in adopting an Open-Door refugee policy during the first decade of the Revolution had ideological roots than structural causes. It was further argued that shifting this trend to Closed-Door policy, the first post-War government did so mainly due to the gradual deterioration of this ideological

context. The changes in the subsequent post-War governments' refugee policy were more strategically oriented and of structural nature in terms of its causation. Accordingly this paper identified two distinct kinds of changes in Iran's refugee policy and tried to illustrate them from the cases of refugee policymaking in Iran over the 1979–2016 periods. First, Iran's refugee policy and experiment during 1979–1988 was marked by a radical shift from an Open-Door to a Closed-Door policy—which entailed simultaneous changes in policy's ultimate goals, strategies used to attain those goals and the setting of the strategies. While taking past experiences and new lessons learnt for granted—as to be of leading effect on policymaking process—this paper tried to illustrate a complete account of the role that religious-revolutionary ideological system played in the refugee policymaking process over this period. Accordingly it was argued that the very early post-Revolution refugee policy was made within a rigorous and tough ideological system which was for the most part plausible and comprehensible to the majority of the society. This framework of ideas which was embedded in the very terminology of the Supreme Leader and then political discourses was taken for granted and insusceptible to scrutiny and inquiry. Furthermore it was argued that each measure taken by the government would be recognized only if it is not trespassing or violating the defined norms in this common-coherent religious-revolutionary ideological framework. As a result the post-Revolution government was prevented from taking logical measures despite of its realization of the country's real economic constraints and political and security considerations. However by passing time—following the death of the Revolution's founder, and the end of the Holy Defense—the ideally-oriented setting was gradually fading away and replaced by more logical and nationalistic measures taken by post-War governments. Getting away from the religious–revolutionary norms and values, Iranian society developed a rapidly increasing anti–Afghans atmosphere—which is easily observable in the discourse of the authorities, in the ordinary people's occasional temper tantrums throwing, as well as in the confrontational products of the country's mass media in remonstrance to Afghans' presence in the country. Accordingly the second type of changes in Iranian refugee policy was elaborated on and it was argued that while the basic goals behind all post-War governments' refugee policy was based on the repatriation the level and setting of the basic instruments or techniques used to attain the very same objective had to be frequently modified and adjusted. Considering the realities on the ground and increasing recognition of its economic limitations and its refugee absorption capacity constraints along with drawing attention to the lessons learnt from the past experiences, the post-War governments gradually elevated and adjusted their refugee policy to a more and more comprehensive, cardinally oriented, multifaceted framing, and nationally advantageous strategic one which would address different dimensions of the real challenge that the country was dealing with. Accordingly Iran shifted its refugee policy from an idealistic Open-Door to a more realistic one of Closed-Door which had at its core the repatriation of all the refugees and whose strategies has to be frequently adjusted based on various existing settings, and efficiency, and practical outcomes of previously adopted policies.

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Notes

1 “Afghanistan was a backward nation: a life expectancy of about 40, infant mortality of at least 25 per cent, absolutely primitive sanitation, widespread malnutrition, illiteracy of more than 90 per cent, very few highways, not one mile of railway, most people living in nomadic tribes or as impoverished farmers in mud villages, identifying more with ethnic groups than with a larger political concept, a life scarcely different from many centuries earlier” (Blum: 2004: 339).

2 During the 1850s up to 5,000 Hazāri households migrated to Iran and settled at Jām and Bākharz; some 15,000 families (approximately 168,000 people) settled in Turbat-i Jām in the east of Mashhad during (1880–1903) who constituted up to 90 per cent of the local population (Abbasishavazi et al. 2005a: 16).

3 After a period of 40-year relative political stability under Zahir Shah (1933–1973), and during the coup d'état of Mohammad Davoud Khan—the cousin of Zahir Shah in 1973—the Republican government of Afghanistan was established. In 1978 the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan led a communist coup known as Thor. The communist party in power put the socialist program on the agenda of the government which were not favorable to the traditional Afghan society and as a result led to their migration to two Islamic neighbouring countries, Iran and Pakistan (Nasresfahani 2016: 93-95). One of those reforms was compulsory education and giving women the right to vote. As Hoodfer (2004) also points out, most of those who migrated to Iran during the late decades of (1980’s) were illiterate who did not want to send their daughters to school, they mentioned the compulsory education system by the Soviet-backed state as one of their main reasons for immigration. Another reason for immigration was the change in the marriage law, which required the consent of the bride and set the age of marriage at 16 which for many this was seen as an indication of the Soviet’s effort to destroy Islam.

4 As the tensions between the central communist government and the anti-communist Muslim guerrillas intensified, the Soviet Union who felt threatened to lose its ally in the south invaded Afghanistan in late December 1979 and kept its troops in Afghanistan’s land until mid-February 1989. In 1980—backed by Soviet Union troops—Babrak Karmal was installed as ruler while opposition intensifies with various Mujahidin groups fighting Soviet forces. By 1985 it is estimated that half of Afghan population had become displaced due to prolonged internal war—three million of which sought refuge to Iran.

5 The Soviet troops pulled out by 1989, however domestic civil wars continued since the Mujahidin fraction was trying to overthrow the Soviet-backed ruler, Najibullah.

6 In 2005 BAFIA’s—Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants’ Affairs—registration plan known as āmāyish- phase II indicated that among refugees the majority (40.47%) are ethnic Shia Hazāri, 22.07% Sunni Tajik, 8.8% Sunni Pashtuns, 3.1% Sunni Baluch, and 2.5% Sunni Uzbek.

7 In Islamic doctrines there is a concept called Hijra literary meaning migration for the cause of Allah, which in particular refers to the migration of Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina and in general refers to the Islam’s order to the Muslims who are living in Darul-Kufr that obliged them to migrate to Darul-Islam—where Sharia is the supreme law.

8 An ancient city in Khorasan province, eastern Iran which is located about 40 kilometer west of Afghanistan borders.

9 A city in Razavi Khorasan province, Iran.

10 On Feb. 11 the royal reign collapsed and guerrillas and rebel troops overwhelmed troops loyal to the Shah in armed street fighting, and finally brought Khomeini to official power.

11 Among other unique features of the Islamic Revolution are disguise for Oppressors and autocracy, support for the Oppressed, and deep desire for a modern Utopia and religious identity, and disdain for the West.

12 Obviously in a society where more than 98 per cent of its population is Muslim—90 per cent of which Shia—and in the wake of the heady events of the Revolution under a charismatic leadership, most citizens felt strongly committed to Islam and its orders.

13 As he says “Our obeying holders of authority” like jurists, “is actually an expression of obedience to God”, (even he emphasized that Faqīh’s rule has “precedence over all secondary ordinances [in Islam] such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage” (Imam Khomeini 1981: 54).

14 Robin Wright (2010) says Shiite clerics have a mandate to mobilize and direct their flocks into action, not just to advise them. That power explains why Ayatollah Khomeini emerged as a natural leader to unite both secular and religious opposition against a twentieth-century dynasty.

To better understanding how Khomeini’s doctrine of vilāyat-i faqīh was met by high approval of the majority of the society note this example: when Khomeini issued the Fatwa of executing the political prisoners in 1988, in the first subsequent Friday Prayer—just one week after the enforcement of the Fatwa—following the political sermon articulated by Hojjat al-Islam Musavi Ardebili in support of

Khomeini's Fatwa, thousands of prayers started chanting (Hypocrite prisoners should be executed). Likewise whatsoever uttered by Ayatollah Khomeini was considered as must–be–obeyed command by the overwhelming majority of the revolutionaries, so it is not far-fetched that Khomeini's order to "open the border to our Muslim brother refugees" be met by the high approval of the feverous Islamic nation.

15 For instance addressing the representatives of Tehran's guilds and merchants, Khomeini said:
"Those displaced Afghans who are now in Iran and have lots of problems . . . well, the nation is largely cooperating in all the affairs the country is grappling with, however the nation's assistance would not meet the needs . . . this is the duty of the government to address these issues . . . well! we have guests, who are Afghans, who are Muslim, or let's suppose that they are Iraqi or the poor who have evicted from their homes, their possessions have being looted and they have been sent here, so now what should we do with them? Should not they be welcomed?! We are Muslim, they are Muslim too; we should welcome them, serve them and this is the government who is fulfilling these duties" (Musavi-Khomeini 1980–1981a: 207).
Elsewhere he said: "We should not only consider the government's plight but also the plights which the poor and the Oppressed are trapped in, and also the difficulties of those refugees who have come and are now here. We cannot simply ignore these displaced people, particularly those who are our own, who have come from regions that have been trespassed from Khuzestan, Ahvaz, and Khorramshahr; and also we have guests who have come from other places; well! they are Afghans or Iraqis, they are Muslim, or the poor who have evicted from their homes, their possessions have being looted and they have been sent here, so what should we do with them? Should not they be welcomed? We are Muslims, they are Muslims too, we should welcome them, serve them and this is the government who is doing these duties; we cannot fully and properly understand the depth of the plights which the government have got stuck in unless some representatives from the government sit down and explain the conditions" (Musavi-Khomeini 1982–1983: 278).

16 "These spoils are for the poor Refugees who have been driven out from their homes and their possessions, while seeking grace from Allah and His pleasure, and helping Allah and His Messenger. These it is who are true in their faith. And those who had established their home in this city before them and had accepted faith love those who came to them for refuge, and find not in their breast any desire for that which is given them (Refugees), but prefer the Refugees to themselves, even though poverty be their own lot. And whose is rid of the covetousness of his own soul—it is these who will be successful."
Or in al-Anfāl Sure, verse 72 He says: "Surely those who believed and migrated and strove hard in the way of Allah with their possessions and their lives, and those that sheltered and helped them - they alone are the true allies of one another. And those who believed but did not migrate (to Dar al-Islam), you are under no obligation of alliance unless they migrate. And should they seek help from you in the matter of religion, it is incumbent on you to provide help unless it is against a people with whom you have a pact. Allah is cognizant of all that you do."

17 Statistics are derived from the official website of the Foundation for Preservation and Propagation of the Values of the Sacred Defense.

18 To define extensive attendance of Iranians in the battlefields of the Iraq–Iran War, Efraim Karsh (2002: 72) use the term "galvanize" and said "Iran was galvanized" and Iranians rallied behind their new government helping to stop and then reversing the Iraqi advance.

19 In religious training of Islam there are so many verses and Hadīs in Quran and Sunnah in praising the concept of martyrdom and glorifying the position of martyr—which provide Muslims with good incentives to attend wars against kuffār (infidels). For instance 154 Al-Baqarih says: "And say not of those who are killed in the cause of Allāh that they are dead; nay they are living; only you perceive not." Or 169 Āl-i ʿimrān says: "think not of those who have been slain in the cause of Allah, as dead, nay, they are living in the presence of their Lord and are granted gifts from Him." And in73 al-Nnisāʾ we read: "Let those they fight in the cause of Allah who would sell the present life for the Hear-after and whoso fights in the cause of Allah, be he slain or be victorious, We shall soon give him a great reward."

20 The secretary of the first joint commemoration of Afghan martyrs in eight-year Sacred Defense and Iranian martyrs of jihad in Afghanistan titled "30 years of shared blood"—held on 2015/05/09 at Shahīd Bihishtī University's international conference center—stated that Afghan refugees community in Iran have dedicated about three thousand martyrs and veterans during Difā'-i Muqaddas.

21 Or for instance these words sung in the form of an anthem had become the mantra of the Iranian soldiers over the eight-year War:
Who has a passion for Karbala, so it's time to proceed toward it,
Who has the intention of accompanying us, so it's time to do so,
Fellow Travellers! Be aware where we are going . . .
We are heading Karbala . . . Karbala!
Said the Messenger of Allah: "Hussein is part of me and I am part of Hussein" . . .
My Soul! Hussein! We are coming
Karbala! Karbala! We are coming . . .

22 In an eloquent expression while admiring Mujahedin's resistance, Khomeini emphasized that "they broke the grandeur of the super power Soviet Union".

"The value of the Afghan guerillas' resistance and movement lies in its achievement of breaking the grand idols that were carved of the grandeur of the Soviet Union, that if anyone dare to say a word to it should be doomed . . . they broke this idol. During these recent months they broke the monster of the Soviet and all what it brought in for them—while their government was against them. The value of what you [Iranian nation] have done here [Iran] and what they [Afghan Mujahedin] have done there [Afghanistan] cannot be measured; these are so valuable that even if half of our nation had been killed towards these values it was still worthwhile . . . since it is not the matter of belly to be worry about if it happens not to have wheat . . ." (Musavi-Khomeini 1980–1981b: 306).

23 In early 1979, 5000 Afghans were hanged by the communist government of Afghanistan on charge of "being Khomeinist" (Loyn 2014; Graham-Harrison 2013; Clark 2013).

24 For instance Amānuallah Amīnī, an Afghan veteran of Difā'-i Muqaddas who has been suffering from spinal cord injury for more than 25 years and its consequences like losing one of his kidneys and the problem of osteoporosis says: "I had experienced war in Afghanistan . . . the borders have separated us from each other though the cultural and religious commonalities are not separable. It made me no difference to fight in Iran or Afghanistan . . . I felt and still feel toward Iran the same way I feel toward my homeland Afghanistan" (Rajaee 2014: 68).

25 Muhammad Sadiq Ahangaran (born 1957, Ahvaz) was an epic poem singer whose dirges' effects on Basiji sensation of warriors in bucking up and heartening them in the battlefield was so great and powerful that the Baath Regime had entitled him "Khomeini's Nightingale".

26 In Robin Wright's words "The Revolution's early passions were replaced by a hard-earned pragmatism, produced in part by excesses that backfired against the clerics and exhausted the population. Under Rafsanjani, arrogance gave way to a conservative realism. The government of God increasingly ceded to secular statecraft" (2010: 2).

27 "Following the ratification of 1951 UN Refugee Convention in 1976 by Iran and based on international commitments, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been providing services to the refugees" (UNHCR 2015–2016: 5).

Prior to 1976 and in Dec.16 1963 Iran adopted some regulations relating to refugees which had been discussed over and ratified by then Council of Ministers. According to the regulations of 1963 "the government of Iran had adopted an ordinance relating to refugees that provided a legal and administrative framework to grant asylum to refugees unless they are regarded as traitors and saboteurs, which remains in force" (Abbasishavazi et al. 2005: 20).

This regulation also provided that "Refugees should not be forcibly returned to the country where their life or freedom is endangered for political, racial or religious reasons or for their membership in a particular social group" (World Refugee Survey 2009: 4).

28 Among the most famous political consequences of the Islamic Revolution which severely isolated Iran—both politically and economically—was the seizure of the US embassy and holding many of its staff hostage by radical students—Dānishjūyān-i Khatt-i Imam.

29 Among 3 million Afghans in the country only 840,158 registered ones are considered as refugees which means only those population are under the care and support of the UNHCR and are granted legal status by the government, and the rest are considered as illegal labor migrants (Human Rights Watch: 2013).

30 According to these terms and conditions refugees had access to free health care and food, and free primary and secondary education, adult literacy training, and subsidies on basic essentials; they also were permitted to work in one of 16 designated, menial occupations but were barred from owning their own businesses or working as street vendors, and their employment was limited to low-wage, manual labors.

31 Quoted from Muhammad-Rahim Afzali, the former Afghanistan cultural advisor in Iran (Tasnim News Agency: 2014).

32 It is quoted from Ayatollah Montazeri that in response to Bazargan's stance on refugees he had said that: "The Revolution has already occurred and the Islamic rule has already established . . . there is no difference between Iranians and Afghans . . . since we all are Muslim . . . and there is no logical base in revolutionary thinking for preventing Afghans from entering our country and keeping them separated from our people" (Tasnim News Agency 2014).

33 In confirmation of Millani's explanation note this memory by Amanullah Amini, an Afghan veteran of Difā'-i Muqaddas; He says "Primarily we had come for military training techniques . . ." (Rajaee 2014: 68).

34 Exact data of the numbers of Afghan workers in Iran is not available, even in the public censuses conducted in 1986, 1996, and 2006 there is no reliable information regarding Afghan Refugees; this is mostly because they refrain from providing any information regarding their job status being afraid of losing their jobs.

35 Quoted from the coordinator of the Afghan Refugees Coordination Council of Mashhad in a report of the living conditions of 600,000 Afghans in Mashhad published in Ettelaāt newspaper on 23. Sep. 1983 (Nasresfahani 2016: 134).

36 Iraq-Iran War forced the country to allocate huge part of its budget to the defense affairs and led many fertile lands and economically productive units to lose their productivity such that by the end of War productivity plummeted. Urban poverty doubled. Real per capita income dropped by 45 per cent since the Revolution. And price controls and strict rationing of basic consumer goods failed to prevent rampant inflation (Maloney 2016).

Also, according to Rajaee (2005: 59), in 1994 expenditure on two million Afghans was estimated by the Iranian government to be as high as $US10 million per day for subsidized education, health services, transport, fuel and basic goods. See also (Turton and Marsden: 2002: 11)

37 Sīyāsat-i tashannujzudāyī

38 Dūrān-i Sāzandigī

39 After the end of the Iraq-Iran War, the intension between Iraq and Kuwait intensified and led to Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 2nd August 1990. US-led Coalition forces from 34 nations attacked Iraq in 1991 and during an eleven-day Desert Storm operation defeated Iraq and expelled Iraqi troops from Kuwait land (17 Jan. 1991–28 Feb. 1991). The aftermath of this operation directly affected the stability in the region. Severally affected by its eight-year War with Iran, Iraq's political cohesion was increasingly and dramatically declined; this domestic instability exacerbated increasingly following the Operation Desert Storm which had provided the Kurds in north and the Shias in South and Center Iraq with a golden opportunity to take over some key cities in those parts. However the central government was still powerful enough and could defeat them immediately and harshly and soon after could regain its control over the condition. As a result a mass influx of more than 2 million Kurds and Iraqi Shias had to flee their homeland and seek refuge to Iran and Turkey.

40 Soviet Union Disintegration had a large destabilizing effect on the Nagorno-Karabakh region in Azerbaijan which has a long history of unresolved dispute between Azerbaijan and its ethnic Armenian majority. The break-up of the Soviet Union in late 1991 worsened the unstable condition in the region since Karabakh declared independence which caused the conflict erupting into an open full-scale war. By 1993 and following the instability created due to this conflict, thousands of Azeri fled the country and settled at Iran's borders with Azerbaijan along Aras River.

41 According to UNHCR 1998 Statistical Overview, the number of refugee population in Iran from (2,850,000) in 1989 got almost double in 1990 (4,174,400) and 1991 (4,405,000).

42 Ahmad Hosseini the director general for expatriate and refugee affairs of the Interior Ministry of Iran: "We settled a total of 50,000 refugees in 8 camps erected by the Red Crescent Society in areas such as Imishi, Saatlou and Saberlou inside the Republic of Azerbaijan, 5km from the joint border; thus we prevented the rush of refugees to our country" (Alborzi 2006: 72).

43 In 1996, following the resurgence of Iraqi Kurdish factions' fighting—Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)—and taking control of two main southern cities of Irbil and Sulaymaniyya by the Baghdad-government-backed KDP, the PUK leadership fled to Iran and 200,000 of his Kurds supporters followed; they were massed on the Iran' borders by early September 1996 (Rajaee: 2000).

44 Ahmad Hosseini—Iran's top official in charge of refugees—told in a news conference: "Our hands are empty as far as providing food to the refugees is concerned; We can set up camps for about 10,000 but we have no cash, no flour, no rice, no cooking oil, no grains, no clothing, no fuel and no medicine; We have asked for immediate aid from UNHCR if they want to avoid a human tragedy and they have responded positively; We have provided and will continue to offer medical services to the needy in our border cities. But if refugees are safe at the border, they shall receive help there; It is Iran's policy not to admit any more refugees into the country unless in an emergency" (Reliefweb 1996).

45 Quoted from Ahmad Hosseini

46 For instance in 2012 referring to the enactments of the the country's National Security Council, Seyyed Taqi Shafii, director general of the immigrants and foreign affairs of Mazandaran province, declaring the inhabitation and trafficking of all Afghans into this city as prohibited said: ". . . we all have to contribute to the enforcement of this law. . . to purify our city from their (Afghans') presence. . . today, their presence is a real threat to our city. . ." (Fars News Agency 2012)

Addressing Afghans with such phrases has turned into the ordinary narratives of the state apparatuses, authorities and ordinary people, and the media have also had a significant impact on the institutionalization of this kind of discourse in the society.

47 For instance Ali Khamenei expressed gratitude for UNHCR's efforts to make the repatriation of Afghan refugees sustainable (UNHCR: 2003).

48 The refugee policy in Iran is neither part of the national security nor foreign policy agenda and the responsibilities for refugee has been allocated to BAFIA (Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs) within the Ministry of Interior. The policies are set by this

agency which is not answerable to any department. Due to lack of a comprehensive and codified refugee law in Iran, most of the policies set by BAFIA have been likely to change.

49 However Iran police officer—Sardār Ahmadi Muqaddam—said on a TV program "We install barbed wires on the borders they [Afghans] open their route through the sea, we control the sea routes they find another way . . . the problem is beyond that that could be solved by border control; the problem is laid inside Afghanistan and the need of Iran labor market to foreign workers; Iranian youths do not like to do manual works anymore since they are educated . . . in near recent years after we deported some of the Afghan workers the production of many cattle farms and brick factories ceased; Iranians Are seeking for jobs but they do not do such works . . ." (Bavali 2014).

50 Thousands of children born in Iran to Iranian mothers and foreign fathers do not have the opportunity to attain Iranian citizenship until they are at least eighteen years old. Subsequently, these children often cannot access basic social services available to citizens. Out of fear of deportation or unfamiliarity with the law, these Afghans do not officially register their marriages to Iranian women. Children whose parents fail to obtain marriage certificate, have little hope of ever acquiring Iranian citizenship under existing laws (Nikou 2015).

51 Prof. Mollazehi is a senior specialist in the West Asia and the Subcontinent related issues, and Afghanistan and Pakistan special analyst.

52 From the Iranian perspective, with approximately two million heroin users, and an estimated 1,000 pounds of opium crossing into Iran from Afghanistan each month the security concerns regarding narcotics have been always among the serious challenges of all the governments. Especially in 2005 the opium production in Afghanistan was dangerously on increase. According to the United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime's 2005 report, the total value of opium exported from Afghanistan to the neighboring countries was $2.7 billion—about 52% of Afghanistan GDP. "During the last two decades more than 3,000 policemen and soldiers have been killed in Iran's war against drugs, along with an estimated 10,000 traffickers" (Sadat and Hughes 2010).

However, analysis of the statistics released by the Organization of Prisons—Sāzmān-i Zindānhā—shows that 16 hundredths of a per cent of the total refugee population in Iran are criminals and in custody; comparing this figure with the Iranians' proportion figure of 29 hundredths of a per cent, he concluded that this prevalent misguided belief is due to the exaggerated statements made by the medias (Farrokhi 2013).

53 Professor Fatemeh Ashrafi is the director of the "Association for Protection of Refugee Women & Children" (HAMI). Since its establishment in 2003, HAMI CEO has been actively contributing to the empowerment of Afghan refugees and migrants women in Iran.

54 Afghanistan Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation announced on May 11, 2010 that during March and April more than 50,000 Afghans, through Nimrouz border, and around 30,000 others, through Islam Qal'a border, had been deported to Afghanistan. Afghan officials also claimed that a number of these returnees had been forcibly deported all of a sudden while their families had been left in Iran (BBC Persian: 11 May 2010).

55 Iran donated $560 million at the International Pledging Conference in Tokyo in 2002—for Afghanistan's reconstruction (Wright 2010: 157).

Some of the Iran's reconstruction activities in Afghanistan include: 1– in the field of road construction: Doghārūn-Harāt road, Harāt to Armak (60 Km), Great Bridge of Malik (Abrisham Bridge), contributing in the construction of Sangān-Harāt rail way, 2– in the field of energy: 20 KV double-circuit line of Doghārūn-Harāt, 132/20 KV power post of Harat, 20 KV double-circuit line of Zabul-Zaranj, as well as many other fields from agriculture to village development, telecommunications, hygiene, transportation, automation and so on. Moreover Iran has frequently provided the Transitional government of Afghanistan with cash payments (Ministry of Interior 2013: 61).